

SNOWE, BREAUX, BOXER and LAUTENBERG in introducing legislation to reauthorize a highly successful and collaborative program known as the National Estuary Program (NEP).

In 1987, Congress created the NEP to restore designated estuaries of national significance. Since 1987, the EPA estimates that the NEP has preserved, restored or created approximately 719,000 habitat acres, and has leveraged \$200 million in local, State and private sector funding, with an average leveraging ratio of 11 to 1. The NEP has accomplished this by fostering and maintaining strong partnerships among Federal, State and local governments, the private sector and local stakeholders, and by using a consensus, community-based approach with strong local control in developing and implementing their Comprehensive Conservation and Management Plans (CCMPs).

Today, there are 28 estuaries in the NEP, covering more than 42 percent of the continental U.S. shoreline. Nearly half of the U.S. population resides in coastal areas, with thousands of new residents arriving every year. In the United States, estuaries provide habitat for three-quarters of America's commercial fish catch, and 80-90 percent of the recreational fish catch.

Estuarine-dependent fisheries are among the most valuable, with an estimated worth of \$1.9 billion nationwide. Coastal recreation and tourism generate an additional \$8 to \$12 billion annually. According to recent analyses by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), estuaries of the NEP employ 39 million people and support total economic output and employee wages estimated in the trillions. The tourism sector alone employs 1.2 million people and generates more than \$87 billion in expenditures.

Despite their economic and environmental importance, the Nation's estuaries are under increasing threat by the many competing demands placed upon them. Estuaries in the NEP face numerous challenges, including over-enrichment of nutrients, loss of habitat, declines in fish and wildlife, and introduction of invasive species, causing severe declines in water quality, living resources and overall ecosystem health. According to the recent EPA National Coastal Condition Report describing the ecological and environmental conditions of U.S. coastal waters and estuary resources, the overall condition of our Nation's coastal waters is fair to poor, and 44 percent of estuarine habitats are impaired for human or aquatic life use.

The NEP offers an effective means to deal with these national problems. The flexible and collaborative nature of the NEP has allowed the local Estuary Programs to develop innovative approaches to address the problems facing estuarine systems, approaches uniquely tailored to local environmental conditions, and to the needs of local communities and constituencies. At the same time, the national struc-

ture provided by the NEP has facilitated the sharing of management approaches, technologies, and ideas that underscore this program's success. Indeed, the National Commission on Ocean Policy highlighted the NEP's focus "on bringing together stakeholders in particular areas that are in or approaching a crisis situation." Additionally, the Commission found "the assessment and planning process used by the NEP holds promise for the future of ecosystem-based management."

Reauthorizing the NEP is an important step in the process of addressing the threats to the health and stability of our Nation's estuaries, which remain one of our Nation's most important economic and environmental resources. The legislation introduced today would reauthorize funding for the NEP at \$35 million annually to provide the funds necessary for this program to succeed into the future. I look forward to working with my colleagues on reauthorization of the NEP in the months ahead.

I ask by unanimous consent that the text of the legislation be printed in the RECORD.

There being no objection, the bill was ordered to be printed in the RECORD, as follows:

S. 2606

*Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representatives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

#### SECTION 1. NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM.

Section 320(i) of the Federal Water Pollution Control Act (33 U.S.C. 1330(i)) is amended by striking "2005" and inserting "2010".

#### UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT—NOMINATION OF J. LEON HOLMES

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that at 9:45 a.m., on Tuesday, July 6, the Senate proceed to executive session for the consideration of Calendar No. 165, the nomination of J. Leon Holmes to be U.S. district judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas. I further ask consent that there then be 6 hours of debate equally divided between the chairman and ranking member or their designees; provided further that following that debate the Senate proceed to a vote on the confirmation of the nomination with no intervening action or debate. I further ask consent that following the vote, the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action and the Senate then resume legislative session.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

#### EXECUTIVE SESSION

#### EXECUTIVE CALENDAR

Mr. FRIST. I ask unanimous consent that the Senate immediately proceed to executive session to consider the following nominations on today's Executive Calendar: Calendar Nos. 676, 711, 713, 714, 716, 717, 718, 719, 721, 722, 723,

724, 726, 728, 730, and all nominations on the secretary's desk.

I further ask unanimous consent that the nominations be confirmed en bloc, the motions to reconsider be laid upon the table, and the President be immediately notified of the Senate's action.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The nominations considered and confirmed are as follows:

#### NOMINATIONS

##### DEPARTMENT OF STATE

James Francis Moriarty, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Nepal.

Benjamin A. Gilman, of New York, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Fifty-eighth Session of the General Assembly of the United Nations.

Anne W. Patterson, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations, with the rank and status of Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary, and the Deputy Representative of the United States of America in the Security Council of the United Nations.

Anne W. Patterson, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be a Representative of the United States of America to the Sessions of the General Assembly of the United Nations during her tenure of service as Deputy Representative of the United States of America to the United Nations.

Joseph D. Stafford III, of Florida, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of The Gambia.

Lewis W. Lucke, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Swaziland.

R. Niels Marquardt, of California, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Counselor to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Cameroon, and to serve concurrently and without additional compensation as Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Republic of Equatorial Guinea.

Charles P. Ries, of the District of Columbia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to Greece.

Suzanne Hale, of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Career Minister, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Federated States of Micronesia.

William R. Brownfield, of Texas, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela.

Ralph Leo Boyce, Jr., of Virginia, a Career Member of the Senior Foreign Service, Class of Minister-Counselor, to be Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the United States of America to the Kingdom of Thailand.